

HALSTEAD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

FIRST DIVISION OF THE DISTRICT

For the year ended 31st December, 1908.

The District is undulating. The subsoil is various, clay and gravel, the former predominating. The chief occupation of the people throughout the district is agriculture. At Earls Colne there is a Foundry employing about 300 men, and a Silk Factory employing about 100 women and girls. Many of the houses in the district are old, and consist of lath and plaster, with thatched roofs, and not being provided with a damp proof course, are damp, and in some instances the site is naturally a damp one. Repairs are carried out as soon as possible where defects are found.

All new houses are inspected before habitation certificates are granted to ensure a proper water supply, satisfactory drainage and sanitary arrangements; but in the absence of building bye-laws no other restriction is placed upon owners intending to build.

THE HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES ACT, 1890.

The following houses have been erected during the year: Colne Engaine: a new house with bakehouse adjoining, a suitable water supply on premises. Another new house in the same parish, but the water is obtained from adjoining premises, belonging to the same owner and the pump draws the water laterally. Earls Colne: A new house, with a new well 12 feet deep on the premises containing a wholesome supply of water. Two new houses in the same parish have been erected, and a new well 12 feet deep sunk on the premises, but the water, upon analysis, was found to be of a suspicious nature. Arrangements have been made for the occupants to obtain water for domestic purposes from a tank, the water from which is derived from a deep well, and is satisfactory. The tank is within a reasonable distance. Three houses have been closed during the year at Pebmarsh as unfit for habitation, and several have been repaired in the District. Magisterial proceedings were taken in one case of overcrowding at Earls Colne and the nuisance was abated.

The District is fairly supplied with water generally, the majority of houses having a supply on the premises, but mostly from shallow wells. In localities where houses have not good water on the premises, the supply is taken from public wells under the control of the Sanitary Authority. The lower parts of Earls Colne and White Colne are in need of a better supply. Two wells have been closed during the year, viz., one at Earls Colne Schools (Elementary) ; one at White Colne (Wadleys). A Dipping Well at Snowden Fen, Halstead (Rural), has been properly protected and a suitable pump erected. A public well has been repaired at Greenstead Green (Halstead Rural), and one at Pebmarsh. All the public supplies are now properly protected.

There are 25 registered Cowsheds and Dairies in the District, all of which are periodically inspected, and since the adoption of Bye-Laws the majority have been renovated and are now generally satisfactory. With the exception of Earls Colne, the remainder of the District is so scattered that great difficulty would be experienced in proper treatment of sewage, and only certain localities can be effectively dealt with. The privy system is mostly in vogue, being substituted wherever possible by pail and earth closets.

House refuse is either buried in garden ground, burnt up, or carted away periodically whenever necessary. Great attention is given to the house surroundings in the course of inspections. All suspicious cases of illness are reported to me by the Head Teachers of the Elementary Schools, and children from infected houses and areas are kept from school for a period.

Infectious cases, where isolation cannot be carried out at home, are removed to the Council's Hospital at Hedingham, or to the Halstead Urban Hospital by arrangement. The houses and fabrics are subsequently fumigated and disinfected.

All deaths from Phthisis are notified to me by the Registrar of Deaths, and the houses afterwards disinfected.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES (NOTIFICATION) ACT, 1889.

The following cases were notified during the year :—

Erysipelas.	January	25.	BURST, ANNIE, aged 20 years, The Green, Earls Colne.
	February	11.	LEATHERDALE, MRS., aged 44 years, The Hill, White Colne.
	„	11.	LAST, MRS., aged 50 years, High Street, Earls Colne.
	May	4.	LONG, MRS. HERBERT, aged 40 years, 49 New House Road, Earls Colne
	„	29.	HIGGLETON, RACHEL MARY, aged 25 years, Colchester Road, Earls Colne.
	August	22.	TOKELEY, MRS. LUKE, aged 72 years, Colne Engaine.
Diphtheria.	December	7.	HALE, MRS. ELI, aged 60 years, Colne Engaine.
	„	31.	FRENCH, ROSA, aged 18 years, Queens Road, Earls Colne.
	April	6.	ROWSON, ORALNDO, aged 5 years, Gosfield.

Scarlet Fever.	April	6.	ROWSON, MAURICE, aged 3 years, Gosfield
	„	22.	BROOKS, IRENE, aged 28 years, Greenstead Green
	August	16.	NOTT, JOHN, aged 3 years, Magnolia House, Pebmarsh.
	October	29.	PUDNEY, IDA EMILY, aged 5 years, Colchester Road, Halstead Rural.
	December	9.	ARGENT, JULIA, aged 24 years, The Fen, Halstead Rural.
Typhoid Fever.	November	4.	WADLEY, ZACH, aged 5 years, White Colne.
	„	5.	WADLEY, FRED, aged 7 years, White Colne.

The Diphtheria cases occurred in an isolated gamekeeper's cottage and were confined to these children. The origin of sporadic cases of Diphtheria is doubtless difficult to locate. Had the milk supply been the source, other cases would have occurred. On visiting the cottage I did not find any nuisance, but such are apt to readily arise in the surroundings of keepers' cottages and require special care. There was ample accommodation to isolate the cases at home. The Scarlet Fever case notified on 22nd April I was unable to trace the origin ; there was ample accommodation for isolating the case at home. The case notified on August 16th was in a child who had been with his mother to Clacton-on-Sea, and doubtless contracted the disease there ; the case was well isolated at home. The cases notified on October 29th and December 9th, were part of a slight epidemic in the Urban District of Halstead, with which they had frequent intercourse. The case notified on 29th October was isolated at home, but the one notified on 9th December was admitted to the Hedingham Isolation Hospital, owing to insufficient accommodation in the cottage. The cases of Typhoid Fever at White Colne arose from drinking water from a shallow and contaminated well on the premises, which the parents had been advised not to use, and if used to boil, but this latter precaution had been ignored. There is a deep well within a 100 yards, which can be utilized for a small consideration.

Zymotic Case Rate. The Zymotic case rate was 3·42 per thousand of population estimated to middle of 1908.

Systematic Inspection. In conjunction with Mr. Cross, (Sanitary Inspector), I have made an inspection of the whole of my District. Notes are recorded in the Inspector's Journal, which is produced at each meeting of the Council.

Bakehouses & Slaughter Houses. The bakehouses and slaughter-houses of the district have all been inspected and found in proper order.

Factory and Workshops. These have all been inspected and are in a satisfactory condition.

Births. During the year 106 births were registered, of which 55 were males and 51 females. Eight illegitimate births were registered. The birth rate was 22·56 per thousand of population estimated to middle of 1908. The number of births registered in 1907 was 99, and in 1906, 88. The births were distributed amongst the various parishes as follows :—Halstead (Rural), sixteen ; Earls Colne, forty eight ; White Colne, nine ; Colne Engaine, twelve ; Pebmarsh, eight ; Little Maplestead, six ; and Gosfield, seven.

Deaths

During the year 57 deaths were registered (excluding eight in the Union Workhouse and one in the Colchester Hospital belonging to the District); twenty-five being males and thirty-two females. The corrected death rate was 14.05 per thousand of population estimated to middle of 1908. The number of deaths registered in 1907 was 51 and in 1906, 51. The deaths were distributed in the various parishes as follows:—Halstead (Rural), 9; Earls Colne 23, plus five in Workhouse; White Colne 7, plus one in Workhouse; Colne Engaine 7; Pebmarsh 6, plus one in Workhouse and one in Essex and Colchester Hospital; Little Maplestead 2, and Gosfield 4, plus one in Workhouse.

Zymotic Death Rate.

The Zymotic Death Rate was 0.42 per thousand of the population estimated to middle of 1908, and is very satisfactory. It consisted of two deaths from Whooping Cough.

Infant Death Rate.

The Infant Death Rate was 94, and is measured by the proportion of deaths of infants under one year to births registered, and is expressed as so many per thousand births. This year it included 3 from congenital defects, 2 from Whooping Cough, 2 from Bronchitis, 1 from Pneumonia, 1 from premature birth, and one was accidentally suffocated whilst in bed with his parents.

Causes of Death.

Five deaths were due to Phthisis and tubercular affections, ten to chest affections (Pneumonia and Bronchitis); ten to Cancer; seven to Heart Disease, and thirty-four to all other diseases. Ten were those of children under 1 year; two between 1 and 5 years of age; three between 5 and 15 years of age; three between 15 and 25 years of age; sixteen between 25 and 65 years of age; and thirty-two were over 65 years of age. Accidents caused 2 deaths as follows:—One in a girl, aged 6 years, was due to fracture of the neck by being knocked down by a horse. One in a child, 3 months old, was accidentally suffocated whilst in bed with his parents. One was due to suicide by drowning. The mortality from Cancer is high, but the deaths from Phthisis do not increase. The causes of the remainder of the deaths need no comment from me, nearly one half having attained, and in many cases exceeded, sixty five years of age. The natural increase of population was 40.

Table I. (annexed).

Contains Vital Statistics of whole district during 1908 and previous years.

Table II. (annexed).

Contains Vital Statistics of separate localities in 1908 and previous years.

Table III. (annexed).

Contains cases of Infectious Diseases notified during 1908.

Table IV. (annexed).

Contains causes of and ages at death during 1908.

Table V. (annexed).

Contains Infantile Mortality during the year 1908.

J. Henry Ashworth. M.D.; M.R.C.P.E.

